

## SUCCESS STORY

### HIV/AIDS Prevention Program in Women's Prison

Director of local NGO in Uzbekistan conducts innovative HIV/AIDS prevention program in women's prison



Ms. Nikitina in the classroom with her students.  
Photo: Dmitry Subotin, NGO 'Intilish'

***"I saw that the training helped women prisoners to believe that life is going on and that they can help prevent others from being infected with HIV/AIDS."***

— Tatyana Nikitina, Director of the NGO Intilish

Over the last five years, the USAID/CAR Regional Training Program has conducted several programs to increase HIV/AIDS awareness among medical professionals, NGO leaders, students, and educators in Uzbekistan. An active alumna of one of these programs, Ms. Tatyana Nikitina, Director of the NGO Intilish, recently used USAID funding to conduct a training for an often-overlooked group—prisoners.

Twenty-two female prisoners (of whom 20% are HIV infected) and four prison administration officials participated in this program. The purpose was to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS in the prison through the training of volunteers among the prison population. The participants learned about prevention techniques and gained skills and materials for disseminating HIV/AIDS awareness information to other prisoners. The program also aimed to reduce the stigmatization of HIV-positive prisoners and included information on anti-retroviral therapy and how to provide support to HIV infected individuals.

According to Ms. Nikitina, many of the female prisoners are former drug users and commercial sex workers, so it is critical that they are educated on HIV/AIDS awareness issues and learn healthy, informed behavior that they can continue after their release from prison.

Soon after completion of the training, the prisoners established an HIV/AIDS support group and trained an additional 12 volunteers to conduct awareness trainings. The participants also organized an information desk in each of the eleven cell blocks within the prison. In June 2004, participants initiated and organized a theatrical-educational performance for more than 400 prisoners. Many participants intend to continue HIV/AIDS prevention activities after their release from prison.

Ms. Nikitina continues to work on HIV/AIDS prevention activities and is developing a series of trainings on HIV/AIDS prevention for male prisoners in Uzbekistan.